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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 001376

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL/C, INL/PC, INL/LP, WHA/PPC, AND WHA/CEN  
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAM

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SUBJECT: ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST: HONDURAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE CHARGED IN MIGRATION SCANDAL.

Classified By: Political Counselor Francisco Palmieri;  
reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1.(C) The Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime brought a charge of abuse of authority against ex-Minister of Government Jorge Ramon Hernandez Alcerro on June 14, 2005. The indictment is for authorizing the departure from Honduras of an 18 year old without the consent of both parents. The abuse of authority charge could result in a penalty of 3-6 years imprisonment. The Special Prosecutor for Organized Crime, Doris Aguilar, told Attorney General Ovidio Navarro that she has sufficient evidence to charge Hernandez Alcerro for his involvement in the Migration and Passport scandal. Alcerro responded by attacking the prosecutor and the Public Ministry for being unprofessional and politically motivated. President Ricardo Maduro stated that the investigator's office should be working on more serious cases.

12. (C) Attorney General Navarro told Emboff that he told Aguilar to proceed, despite the wrath of his own party - the National Party. Navarro says that Members of the National Congress and others are demanding his resignation because he has supported his prosecutors who are aggressively investigating corruption. Prosecutor Doris Aguilar stated that this is the first (and easiest) of a series of charges against Hernandez Alcerro for money laundering and immigration violations. She knows that her actions will be criticized, but says that she has Navarro's full support.

13. (C) COMMENT: Navarro is in a difficult position. It is the Embassy's publicly stated opinion that any effort to remove or to pressure the investigators to stop their corruption investigations would send a detrimental message to the international community about Honduras' commitment to rule of law. It would also suggest complicit corrupt behavior by those seeking to influence the investigations. Although Navarro and the Maduro administration have publicly denied any pressure to end or disrupt the investigations, privately, Navarro told Emboff that he may tender his resignation or at least offer it to remove himself from the situation. END COMMENT.  
Palmer